OPAL Newsletter

Autumn 2 - 2025

OPAL stands for:
Outdoor Play and Learning.

"To ensure that every schoolchild has **an amazing playtime every day** with no excep-tions" (OPAL)

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to an action-packed autumn 2 edition of the OPAL newsletter!

The OPAL team has been busy adding some exciting enhancements to our outdoor provision, including new time challenges for children to complete as they move across the climbing wall. These additions have brought an extra layer of fun and motivation to playtime, helping to keep the children engaged, active and smiling!

Travis Perkins
Your local Timber & Builders Merchant

OPAL Award Celebration

We had such an exciting day on Tuesday 18th November 2025 when the Mayor visited our school to present us with our OPAL Platinum Award! She joined in with our celebrations, playing alongside the children and sharing in the fun.

The Mayor was especially impressed by the way the children worked together, supported one another and showed such brilliant teamwork during their play.

We are incredibly proud of our children and the wonderful example they set during this special visit.

OPAL ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024-25

- Reduced behaviour incidents
- Reduced medical incidents
- Skates and Heelies
- Performance area with music
- Large loose parts for building
- Water wall
- Music wall
- Lawn
- Zen garden
- Board game area
- Large garden sofa
- Prams and suitcases
- Circus skills equipment
- Enhanced mud kitchen
- New bikes and scooters
- Home corner area
- Active zone
- Mindfulness art area

Supporting Schemas and Enhancing Learning

What are schemas?
Schemas are a way for children to construct meaning from what they are doing. Through the use of repeating behaviours children are able to explore their ideas and thoughts in their play.

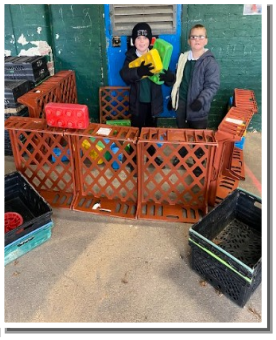
How can we use schemas to enhance learning?
When a child is displaying a schema, then they are in the optimal place for learning. Practitioners can support this 'zone of proximal development' (Vygotsky) by ensuring children have the right resources in order to develop their learning and help them progress to their next steps.

Next time - we will be reviewing the **transporting schema**. This is when children like to transport objects from one area to another. Children will often use objects such as trolleys, baskets, bags, pushchairs, boxes and containers to aid with this.

Please share your views with us by emailing:

admin@fossdene.greenwich.sch.uk

FUNDAMENTA GROUNDWORKS



A big thank you! - A huge thank you goes out to everyone who has donated toys, prams, dressing up clothes, plants and other resources. Your generosity makes such a difference.

To help support the development of the 'transporting schema' we would like donations linked to this, such as:

Bags, boxes, pushchairs, prams, trolleys, containers, baskets, cars, bikes and wheelbarrows.

Enclosing Schema

This is when children enclose resources and materials. Children will often draw big lines around paintings / pictures or enclose cars using other resources such as wooden blocks.

Children enjoy making enclosures for themselves or their toys. Children will particularly enjoy dens and small spaces and will often surround themselves with pillows and blankets.

How you can help…

As we continue to make our playtimes more exciting, no matter what the weather, we will need some equipment to help us to do this.

Donations of any of the following would be greatly received:

Pans / bowls / spoons / plates (plastic or metal) / chairs /prams / skates / skateboards / suitcases on wheels / dolls / teddies / board games / books / toys / dressing up clothes /planks of wood / tyres / fabrics / old carpet / laminate flooring / brooms / scooter boards / water toys / instruments / pipes / cable drums / Lego and construction toys / wellington boots / waterproof trousers / raincoats / socks

Remember, what one person considers worthless or unwanted, another may find valuable or desirable...

Spring term plans...

OPAL play - next phase…

We're thrilled to share some of the exciting plans for the next phase of our outdoor development. Soon, we will be adding hammocks on the lawn between the three trees, creating a calm and cosy space for children to relax and enjoy nature.

We're also introducing rewilding planters in the front playground to encourage wildlife, spark curiosity and bring even more colour and life to our outdoor environment.

In addition, we will be enhancing a range of different zones to offer even more playful, engaging and imaginative opportunities for all children.